

**Application for the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme (PEVS)
in the 2010/11 school year**

[Frequently Asked Questions and Answers]

I. Details of application

1. Q: Where can parents obtain the information on eligibility for PEVS in the 2010/11 school year and the relevant application forms?
A: Information leaflets, application forms and guidance notes for PEVS in the 2010/11 school year are available at District Offices, Post Offices, Regional Education Offices of the Education Bureau (EDB) and the Student Financial Assistance Agency (SFAA). Application forms and related documents may also be downloaded from the homepage of EDB at www.edb.gov.hk or the homepage of SFAA at www.sfaa.gov.hk.

2. Q: Who will be eligible to join PEVS in the 2010/11 school year?
A: Eligible students must be Hong Kong residents with right of abode, right to land or valid permission to remain without any conditions of stay (other than limit of stay) in Hong Kong, and born on or before 31 December 2007.

3. Q: What kinds of supporting documents are required when applying for PEVS for the 2010/11 school year?
A: Applicant should provide copies of valid identity documents of himself/herself, his/her spouse, where applicable, and the child/children applying for PEVS. Such documents include, but are not limited to, copies of Hong Kong Identity Cards and Hong Kong Birth Certificates. Details can be found in paragraphs 1.2, 2.2 and 3.2 of Part B of the Guidance Notes on 2010/11 PEVS.

4. Q: Can children who are born in Hong Kong with parents both holding valid identity documents issued by the Mainland authority apply for PEVS?
A: If the children are born in Hong Kong and issued with valid Hong Kong Birth Certificates, they are eligible to apply for PEVS even though their parents are not Hong Kong residents, provided they can meet the age requirement for application for PEVS. However children holding two-way exit permits only are not eligible to apply for PEVS.

5. Q: Can children who are born in Hong Kong with father and/or mother holding student visa or visitor visa apply for the PEVS?

A: Children applying for the PEVS must be Hong Kong residents with right of abode, right to land or valid permission to remain without any conditions of stay (other than limit of stay) in Hong Kong. Those who are born in Hong Kong, in possession of the Hong Kong Birth Certificate with the word 'Established' shown in the 'Status of Permanent Resident' column or bear the identity of Hong Kong Permanent Residents are eligible to apply for PEVS, regardless of whether their parents are permanent residents of Hong Kong or not (e.g. residents of the Mainland). In other words, children with established Hong Kong permanent residency status are all eligible to apply for PEVS.

Children holding the Hong Kong Birth Certificates which bear the words 'Not Established' in the 'Status of Permanent Resident' column are usually those who are permitted to stay in Hong Kong for a limited period of time. Their permitted period of stay normally coincides with the permitted period of stay of their parents. In such circumstances, the parents of the children must be holding valid travel documents with the visa issued by the Immigration Department of the HKSAR Government **not** falling into the category of student visa or visitor visa for the children to be eligible to apply for PEVS.

6. Q: When should parents return the application forms?

A: PEVS for the 2010/11 school year is now open to application. As it takes time to process applications, parents wishing to receive the Certificates of Eligibility for PEVS before the beginning of the 2010/11 school year are advised to apply **on or before 31 May 2010**.

7. Q: How do parents know whether their applications have been received by the SFAA?

A: For parents who have completed the Acknowledgement of Application (SFAA 247) and returned it together with the application form to SFAA, SFAA will mail the Acknowledgement of Application to the parents within ten working days from the postal date of the application to confirm receipt of the application.

8. Q: When will parents receive the Certificate of Eligibility?

A: Upon receipt of the application and all necessary information, SFAA will generally take six to eight weeks to complete processing of the application. SFAA will inform parents of the results by post. Each eligible student will receive a Certificate of Eligibility for PEVS while unsuccessful applicants will also be informed of the result by way of a notification letter. Enquiries about individual applications may be directed to SFAA's hotline at **2154 2130**.

9. Q: Are children currently in receipt of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme of the Social Welfare Department (SWD) eligible for PEVS?

A: All parents in receipt of CSSA with children at the age appropriate for pre-primary education in the 2010/11 school year, like other parents with pre-primary children, are required to submit applications to SFAA for PEVS, in order to receive fee subsidy through PEVS, if they have not been issued with the Certificate of Eligibility for PEVS. If additional financial assistance on top of the subsidy from PEVS is required, they should approach SWD for additional assistance under the CSSA Scheme. Enquiries about applications on PEVS may be directed to SFAA's hotline at 2154 2130. Enquiries about applications for assistance under the CSSA Scheme for pre-primary education may be made to the Social Welfare Department's hotline at 2343 2255.

10. Q: If children previously in receipt of CSSA cease to be eligible for the scheme in the middle of a school year, could they apply for the PEVS?

A: Theoretically speaking, CSSA families with children currently attending kindergarten classes should already have been issued with the Certificate of Eligibility for PEVS in the school year and can benefit from fee subsidy under PEVS. Under such circumstances, parents of the children need not apply for PEVS again if the family ceases to be eligible for the CSSA in the middle of the school year. However, in case the children, for some special reasons, are not holding valid Certificate of Eligibility, the parents must apply to the SFAA for the 2009/10 PEVS for their children in order that their children can benefit from PEVS in the remaining months of the 2009/10 school year when the family ceases to be eligible for the CSSA. If the children concerned can only attain the appropriate age for admission to kindergarten classes in the 2010/11 school year, the parents should apply for the 2010/11 PEVS for their children.

In parallel, parents can also apply for additional assistance under the Kindergarten and Child Care Centre Fee Remission Scheme (KCFRS) in case the fee subsidy under PEVS is inadequate to cover the entire amount of school fee and the family is financially in need. KCFRS for the 2009/10 school year is now open to application whereas details of application for KCFRS in the 2010/11 school year will be announced by SFAA in around July 2010. For enquiries, please visit SFAA's homepage at www.sfaa.gov.hk or call 2154 2130.

11. Q: Will CSSA families receive less financial assistance related to pre-primary education of their children in the 2010/11 school year?

- A: No, the financial assistance they receive for pre-primary education in the 2010/11 school year will not be less than before. Part of the subsidy from PEVS will be provided to the families by way of direct credit from the Education Bureau to the kindergarten the CSSA children are attending to offset part or the entire amount of tuition fees charged by the kindergarten, dependent on the level of the tuition fees. Additional assistance on top of the subsidy from PEVS, where applicable, will continue to be provided to the parent under the CSSA Scheme for pre-primary education.
12. Q: For CSSA children who have been transferred to SFAA under the referral system, will they continue to receive assistance from SFAA in the 2010/11 school year until their completion of the pre-primary education?
- A: No. CSSA children who have been transferred to SFAA under the referral system and are in possession of valid Certificates of Eligibility for PEVS can continue to receive fee subsidy under PEVS through the prevailing voucher redemption mechanism of kindergartens. If additional financial assistance on top of the subsidy from PEVS is required, they should approach SWD for additional assistance under the CSSA Scheme, as with other CSSA children holding a valid PEVS.

II. Children Already Holding Certificates of Eligibility

13. Q: If parents have already been issued with a Certificate of Eligibility with a validity period beyond the 2009/10 school year, do they have to apply again to SFAA for PEVS in the 2010/11 school year?
- A: No. The 2010/11 application for PEVS is applicable to children who do not possess the Certificate of Eligibility and who will start or continue to attend kindergarten in the 2010/11 school year. If parents have already been issued with a Certificate of Eligibility, they **do not** have to make an application again.
14. Q: If a student holding a valid Certificate of Eligibility is transferred from one kindergarten to another during the 2010/11 school year, will the student still be eligible for school fee subsidy? Is it necessary to make a fresh application for PEVS?
- A: If a student holding a valid Certificate of Eligibility is transferred during the 2010/11 school year from one kindergarten to another local non-profit-making kindergarten eligible for voucher redemption, the student will still be eligible for fee subsidy under PEVS. His/her parents should ask for return of the

Certificate of Eligibility from the previous school upon transfer and produce the original of the Certificate of Eligibility to the new school. Fresh application for PEVS is **not** required.

15. Q: If a student holding a valid Certificate of Eligibility is transferred during the 2010/11 school year to another kindergarten which has not joined PEVS, will the student still be eligible for fee subsidy under PEVS?
- A: No. All newly enrolled students or students changing kindergartens in the 2010/11 school year can receive fee subsidy only when they are attending **eligible local non-profit-making kindergartens**. Students moving to a kindergarten, other than a local non-profit-making kindergarten which is eligible for voucher redemption, in the 2010/11 school year can neither receive fee subsidy under PEVS nor apply for KCFRS in the new school year.

III. Children Applying for the Certificate of Eligibility for the First Time

16. Q: If a child is applying for the Certificate of Eligibility for the first time and he/she will start to attend a private independent kindergarten in the 2010/11 school year, is the child eligible to apply for PEVS and will he/she be able to receive fee subsidy under PEVS?
- A: As long as the child can meet the eligibility criteria to apply for PEVS, he/she will be issued with a Certificate of Eligibility for PEVS. However any newly enrolled student or student changing kindergartens in the 2010/11 school year can receive fee subsidy only when they are attending **eligible local non-profit-making kindergartens**. In other words, the child cannot enjoy fee subsidy under PEVS when attending a private independent kindergarten. In addition, students attending a kindergarten, other than a local non-profit-making kindergarten which is eligible for voucher redemption, in the 2010/11 school year can neither apply for KCFRS in the new school.
- 17 Q: If the parent intends to arrange his/her child to attend a kindergarten eligible for voucher redemption in early 2010, should he/she apply for PEVS for the 2010/11 school year?
- A: PEVS for the 2010/11 school year will only provide fee subsidy to eligible children with effect from the 2010/11 school year. Children who are admitted to kindergarten in the 2009/10 school year (e.g. in early 2010) and wish to benefit from PEVS immediately should apply for PEVS for the 2009/10 school year. Please note that children-applicant must be born on or before 31 December 2006. Parents can obtain the application form for PEVS for

2009/10 from the SFAA, but they must specify the school year they are applying for. The validity period of the Certificate of Eligibility issued after the start of, but within, the 2009/10 school year will span maximally a period from a specified start-off month in the 2009/10 school year through to the end of the 2011/12 school year. The validity period will not be extended although the Certificate of Eligibility is issued in the middle of the school year.

IV. PEVS Subsidy

18. Q: What is the amount of fee subsidy under PEVS in the 2010/11 school year?

A: The amount of fee subsidy in the 2010/11 school year is \$14,000 per student per annum, which will be increased to \$16,000 in the 2011/12 school year. The level of fee subsidy for the 2012/13 school year and afterwards will be announced in due course.

19. Q: If the parent chooses to arrange his/her child who is holding a Certificate of Eligibility to attend a local non-profit-making kindergarten charging an annual school fee of \$15,000 per student in the 2009/10 school year, will the parent be paying \$1,000 to the kindergarten in the 2010/11 school year?

A: Under PEVS, the school fee to be paid by parents should be the difference between the school fee approved to be charged by the kindergarten and the fee subsidy under PEVS in that school year. If the school fee charged by the kindergarten is higher than the subsidy under PEVS, parents have to pay the difference. If the school fee charged by the kindergarten is lower than the subsidy under PEVS, parents will not be reimbursed the difference in cash. All along, individual kindergartens may adjust the school fee according to their annual income and expenditure estimates. Therefore, the difference to be paid by parents to the kindergarten in the 2010/11 school year depends on the then approved fee announced by the kindergarten.

V. Kindergartens

20. Q: Will the Government undertake any monitoring procedures to avoid kindergartens from increasing school fees excessively, which may eventually render parents unable to benefit from PEVS?

A: Fee revision should be approved by EDB. School fees collected by kindergartens should include all items necessary for receiving education at school. Kindergartens should also inform parents in advance of all optional charge items for their reference. Moreover, EDB will require kindergartens under PEVS to disclose their school fees and operation details in the Profile of Kindergartens and Kindergarten-cum-Child Care Centres for market monitoring.

21. Q: Is there a list of eligible PEVS kindergartens available for parents' reference?
 A: "Profile of Kindergartens and Kindergarten-cum-Child Care Centres July 2009" has been uploaded onto the web by EDB in September 2009 for parents' reference. The Profile displays the updated list of all eligible PEVS kindergartens and the approved school fee of all kindergartens for the 2009/10 school year. Parents may browse the Profile (the website: <http://chsc.edb.hkedcity.net/kindergarten/>) for reference.

VI. Kindergarten and Child Care Centre Fee Remission Scheme (KCFRS)

22. Q: Should children eligible for fee remission under KCFRS for attending child care centres in the 2009/10 school year apply for KCFRS only but not PEVS in 2010/11 when enrolled in kindergarten classes in the 2010/11 school year?
 A: No. Applicants should first apply for assistance under PEVS if they intend to obtain fee subsidy. If the subsidy from PEVS is inadequate to cover the tuition fee and the applicant's family is financially in need, the applicant may consider applying for assistance under KCFRS at a later stage.
23. Q: How is the assistance under KCFRS derived after the implementation of PEVS?
 A: Upon implementation of PEVS, if an applicant can pass the means test, SFAA will provide him/her with the fee remission with reference to the level of assistance they are assessed to be eligible for, offset by the amount of subsidy they will receive under PEVS. The following formula will be used to calculate the amount of fee remission for children attending kindergarten nursery, lower and upper classes:

$$\text{Half-day class monthly fee remission} = \frac{\text{Annual tuition fee or fee remission ceiling (whichever is the less)} \times \text{level of assistance} - \text{voucher value dedicated towards fee subsidy}}{\text{No. of operating months of the kindergarten}}$$

$$\text{Whole-day class monthly fee remission} = \frac{[\text{Annual tuition fee or fee remission ceiling (whichever is the less)} \times \text{level of assistance} - \text{voucher value dedicated towards fee subsidy}]}{\text{No. of operating months of the kindergarten}} + [\text{Actual monthly meal charge or maximum meal allowance (whichever is the less)} \times \text{level of assistance}]$$

Fee remission ceilings for KCFRS for children attending nursery, lower or upper classes in the 2009/10 school year are:

Half-day class : \$18,000 per student per annum

Whole-day class : \$29,300 per student per annum

Maximum meal allowance : \$400 per student per month

24. Q: If an applicant who is eligible for fee subsidy under PEVS in 2010/11 intends to apply for additional financial assistance under KCFRS, how should he/she lodge his/her application?

A: The applicant should pay attention to details of application for KCFRS in the 2010/11 school year to be announced by SFAA in due course. The announcement will be made around July 2010. For enquiries, please visit SFAA's homepage at www.sfaa.gov.hk or call **2154 2130**.

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